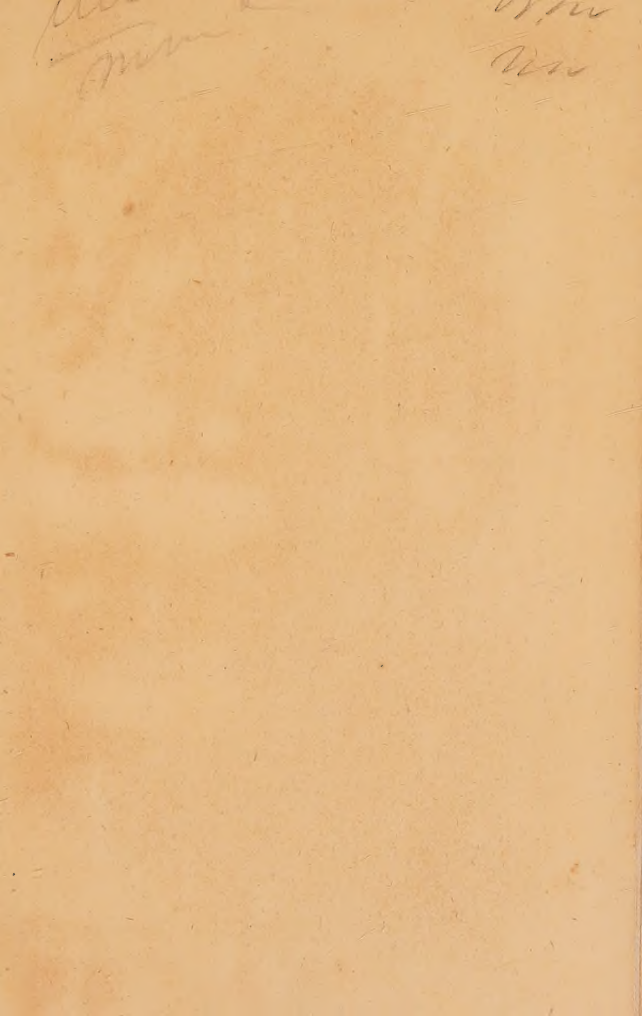


The
First Woman

DR. SPRING







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THE
FIRST WOMAN.

BY

GARDINER SPRING, D.D.

“Add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
By name to come call'd charity, the soul
Of all the rest; then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.”

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THE FIRST WOMAN.

FROM nothing did the first man learn so much of God, as from the creation of a "second human being with faculties and senses like his own." Although we have not a detailed narrative of the creation of *woman*, until after the seventh day, there is reason to believe that she was created on the same day with man. Both sexes of all organized bodies, of plants and animals, were created together. In his account of the creation of man on the sixth day, the sacred historian remarks, "So God created man in his own image, in the im-

age of God created he him; *male and female* created he them." In the next paragraph he proceeds to say, "And on the seventh day God *ended* his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from *all* his work which he had made." From these premises, it is the more natural conclusion, that the woman was included in the creation that was accomplished on the sixth day. She was not an appendage to the perfected creation; it was not perfect without her.

Of the manner of her creation we have a more full account in a subsequent paragraph. It is in the following words: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the

flesh instead thereof; and the *rib which the Lord God had taken from man* made *he a woman.*" Man himself was not created out of nothing, as was the original chaos; he was formed out of the dust of the earth; it was a secondary creation from a prior existing substance. The creation of the woman was also a secondary creation; she was formed from a substance previously existing; not out of the dust of the earth, but from a portion of the newly-created man himself. "She was called woman, because she was taken out of man." The intimacy was perfect; there was oneness between them. She was identified with the man; she formed a part of the man; she was his second self. She was not to be either his mas-

ter or his slave ; but his associate, his equal, imbued with the same spirit, possessing interests in common with him, aiming at common objects, and pursuing the same joyous course of obedience and immortality. The man originally had no priority except in the single fact, that " Adam was first formed, then Eve ;" nor was this equality disturbed, until she became the first transgressor, and the sentence uttered, " thy husband shall rule over thee."

Woman comprises one half the human race ; the birth of males and females is about equal. It has been supposed that, taking the aggregate population of the globe, males are more numerous than females ; and that this surplusage is called for by the waste of

human life by war, and by those calamities to which the retired habits of females are less exposed than the ordinary habits of the male population. Yet is it to be observed, that the average of human life is not so long among females as among males; and that in Asiatic and Mohammedan countries, and in all countries where polygamy prevails, there are more females than males. There is no good reason to believe that the original arrangement of a wise Providence in the equality of numbers in the different sexes, has been seriously disturbed.

What are the peculiarities of woman? What is the sphere which she is destined to occupy? And what are the qualifications which best fit her to occupy that

sphere? Let us devote a few moments to each of these topics.

In speaking of *the peculiarities of woman*, we are not so blind as to suppose that she is faultless. She belongs to a fallen race—herself the first transgressor. *By nature*, she differs not from those “every imagination of the thoughts of whose heart is only evil continually.” Her sinfulness, like man’s, until she is renewed by grace, is strong and constant. Her “heart is fully set in her to do evil,” and in her unrenewed state she does nothing to please God. She is “dead in trespasses and sins,” a “child of wrath even as others.” Her “neck is as an iron sinew, and her brow brass.” There is “no fear of God before her eyes;” she “hates him without a cause.”

She "casts his law behind her back;" she "sets at naught all his counsel, and would none of his reproof." "Of the Rock that begat her she is unmindful, and has forgotten the God that formed her."

Yet we have strong impressions that she presents the fairer side of fallen humanity. She has excellencies which do not belong to the other sex; they are peculiarities that are obvious, and that excite our admiration of the divine wisdom and goodness. Man has the advantage over her in physical power, and in some intellectual endowments; while there are intellectual endowments in which the superiority belongs to her. Her powers of patient research and reasoning, and her powers of invention,

are not equal to those of men; while her perceptions are quicker than the perceptions of men; her judgment and common sense are more worthy of confidence; her memory is more retentive, her imagination more vivid, her taste more delicate and refined, and her curiosity more wakeful.

Her great and distinctive peculiarity will be found in the fact, that *she lives in her affections*. To this fact, if we mistake not, may be attributed her peculiar excellencies and faults. Man lives in the world, he lives amid the contentions of self-interest and the strife of passion; his life is bound up in wealth, pleasure, and fame; nor is he ever happier than when employed in such pursuits most intensely and most success-

fully. Woman has more heart than man; she was made to love and be beloved.

“Her crown is in her heart, not on her head;
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,
Nor to be seen.

A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.”

She may love wealth; but it is not so much for wealth's sake, as for the sake of those she loves. She may love pleasure; but it is more to gratify the objects of her affection than for her own enjoyment. She may be ambitious, and love fame, but it is not for herself. She is gifted far above man in native sweetness and gentleness, and in the winning graces and charities of the heart. “I have observed,” says the celebrated traveller Ledyard, “that women, in all countries, are civil, oblig-

ing, tender, and humane. I never addressed myself to them in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. With man it has often been otherwise. In wandering over the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden and frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, unprincipled Russia, and the wide-spread regions of the wandering Tartar, if hungry, dry, cold, wet, or sick, the women have ever been friendly to me, and uniformly so. And to add to this virtue, these actions have been performed in so free and kind a manner, that if I was thirsty, I drank the sweetest draughts, and if hungry, ate the coarsest morsel with a double relish."

God has given woman this lovely and loving nature. She lives and would live in the hearts of others. The objects of her affection live in her thoughts; they live in her memory, live in her hopes, and in her fears, in her toil and in her repose. She is more frank and has fewer imprisoned thoughts than man, because her affections govern her. She has more eagerness and intensity of character, because her affections are intense. When her affections are crossed, she may have a degree of bitterness that is not ordinarily possessed by men, because her affections are despotic, and her heart would fain play the tyrant. If her pride is more exacting, and her vanity more easily flattered; if her emotions are less impenetrable, and

less under the control of skill and habit, it is because there are strong affections within her which disdain concealment, and will not brook control. She may love cautiously; but where she loves, she loves ardently and long. She is the creature of affection. Even long before her heart is touched by definite attachments, there are within her bosom strong and deep affections, and the un-ignited materials of attachment that is warm and ardent. With those exceptions in which injury and wrong have driven her to desperation, she does not sink beneath this high-born excellence. You may bruise and crush her; but it is by bruising and crushing her unsoiled affections. Even then she is perhaps more lovely than ever; just as

the sweetest herbs and flowers, when bruised, give forth their sweetest fragrance. This is her great peculiarity ; in this lies her power. Ignorance, or mistake of this amiable trait of her character, has been the source of no small portion of the domestic evils and sorrows which have desolated the world. Not to know and not to value this great excellence of her nature is to misinterpret and defame her—is to know nothing of woman. Nor does that man deserve anything better than to be denied the thousand little attentions and delicacies which flow from the strength of her love whose mind is disciplined to mock its tenderness.

Woman is also more *self-sacrificing* than man. There are selfish women ;

but it is not so natural for woman to be selfish; there are more kindly, and generous, and noble feelings in her bosom. She loves more than man, and therefore will give up more. There is nothing she will not sacrifice for those she loves. The life of woman is a life of self-denying sacrifice; the history of woman is the history of one who so identifies the interests of others with her own, that she seeks her own in advancing theirs. Ease, comfort, pride, wealth, pleasure, society, and long-cherished habits, all she was, and all she is, she renounces for those she loves. Could days of anxiety and sleepless nights, could deeds of self-renunciation and mortified pride testify, how accumulated would be the testimony to woman's self-

sacrificing spirit ! To feel thus, and to conduct thus, is her *pleasure*. She could not have the joy of a clear conscience, she would not be happy, she would not be *woman*, without giving up her own good for the good of others.

It is not less true that woman is *more patient in suffering* than man. The burden of suffering was laid upon her at her first apostasy ; and God has prepared her to endure it quietly. Her spirit is more subdued than the spirit of man. Be the suffering bodily or mental, be it poverty, or reproach, or injury, she meets it ; nobly indeed does she meet it. I have seen examples of heroic suffering in woman, that made me envy her lofty bearing. Woman will suffer wrongfully, as man will not suffer. I

know of but one exception to the truth of this remark: *disappointment* cuts deeper in woman than in man. It lingers longer; shut up as she is, and excluded from external excitement, it is brooded over and dwelt upon. She may not *anticipate* danger with the same unblanched countenance and unmoved nerve and muscle as man anticipates it; she may tremble in view of it, and shrink from it more instinctively. Where flight is possible, she will flee from it; and make almost frantic efforts to escape from it. She will dart from it like the swallow from the vulture's beak, but when it is inevitable, and comes crowding upon her, and when the blow falls, it is not woman's heart that is the first to complain.

Woman is likewise *more sensible of her dependence than man*. God has made her dependent, and she feels it. Man is her natural guardian; it is not only her nature to feel her dependence upon him, but her strength and joy. Place her in danger, and she instinctively looks to man; and even if her husband is far away, her thoughts at once centre in him. She cries out for him, though she knows he is distant; nay, though sleeping in his grave, in sudden danger she may peradventure instantly call for her *husband*. Next to God, he is her confidence. Man summons his own firmness, and girds himself for the conflict, while woman retires and retreats to her natural refuge. You see this spirit from her

very girlhood. The girl flies to the boy for protection, the sister to her brother. She early imbibes this depending, confiding spirit, and it goes with her to old age, and to her last rest. She rejoices in it; it is her happiness to feel that she has some one to look up to, and cling to. There are exceptions to this great law of her sex, like Semiramis of Assyria, Catherine of Russia, and Elizabeth of England. When Xerxes invaded Greece, Artemisia, a distinguished female of Halicarnassus, displayed so much valor and skill at the battle of Salamis, as to call from the proud Persian the well-known remark, that "the men had acted like women, and the women like men." There are masculine and Amazonian women, as

there are men who are effeminate. They are women who unsex themselves. This is not woman's amiable and affectionate nature; nor was it the character of the first woman. Nothing is more natural to woman than to feel this dependence; it is not mortifying to her, as it is to man; she is not ashamed of it, but rather is it her pride.

“God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.”

There is a peculiarity also *in woman's love of power*; it is not like the love of power in man. She is proud and ambitious; but it is not so much the love of domination, as the love of influence, that distinguishes her. Man would carry his point, no matter how wo-

man would carry it by her persuasive and insinuating attractiveness. She does not ask it, she does not seek it to be reluctantly gained and grudgingly bestowed; on such terms she would rather be without it. She seeks power, but it is the power of love; she is not apt to triumph over conquests, of whatever kind they be, where she carries not the heart. This is the power she delights in, and these the conquests she boasts of. She is a very tyrant then, and well knows how to sway her gilded sceptre.

“ Mightier far

Than strength of nerve, or sinew, or the sway

Of magic, potent over sun and star,

Is *love*,

Though his favorite seat be feeble woman's breast.”

Woman also is *more fond of embellish-*

ment than man, and embellishment of every kind. It is well that she is so; else would the world we occupy be a degraded world. It is not without reason that classic mythology represents the *Graces* as three young sisters, who were the symbols of all that is beautiful and attractive in the physical as well as the social world. What marvel that a creature thus formed, and for such ends, should be fond of embellishment? that she should be more susceptible to beauty than man, more embellished in her thoughts and writings, more embellished in her person, and possess greater delicacy of taste in all her domestic arrangements? She was formed for this; she has a keener sense of fitness and propriety; she is the presiding genius

in this department; the grace, and polish, and elegance of society are attributable to her; she strews the desert with flowers, and is herself the flower of the desert. This, too, is woman's nature; she seeks embellishment not so much for her *sons* as for her *daughters*. Her and their personal charms are her treasure; and if she polish and adorn them, she does no more, I doubt not, than did our first mother even before she fell. I will not say that this is woman's weakness; it may be, it is, where it is excessive, and degenerates to the love of show. Nor may I say that this does not belong to woman more than to man; the love of admiration may be her ruling passion; and it is proof of her womanly ingenuousness that she

herself is not insensible to the infirmity, nor slow to confess that her true honor is found in higher adornment.

Of the two sexes, woman, it must also be confessed, is *more cheerful than man*. That would be a gloomy continent that were inhabited only by a colony of men; there would be nothing there to tame man's lion-heart. Man is naturally more silent and pensive than woman, though God has so greatly multiplied her sorrows. She has a more elastic and buoyant spirit, and one that bounds over the inequalities of life with a more sylph-like step. Man breaks before the storm; woman bends before it, and regains her courage. Man's mirth is occasional and boisterous; woman's is more uniform and safe. Her

face is lighted up, and her voice is glad-some. Her spirit is familiar with the land of song, and her luxuriant smile skirts it with its richest verdure. A virtuous and cheerful woman, especially if she have the graces and hopes of Christianity, is among the bright things, if not the brightest thing in this low world. Woman's imperfections are not ordinarily dark and sombre shades of character. It is not the leaden cloud of gloom that enshrouds us in the society of woman; we can scarcely help feeling that there are thoughts and emotions passing within her bosom, which, if we sympathize with them, must banish gloom. The suavity of her disposition, the softness of her manners, and the cheerfulness of her spirit,

are just what man requires. This world were cheerless and melancholy, a withered, autumnal, wintry world, were it never cheered by woman's smile. A thousand times have I thought on this beautiful characteristic of woman with thankfulness.

Men are not unfrequently so frigid and crusty, that nothing thaws them but the presence of woman. No matter how overwhelmed with care and depressed a man is, and no matter what the circumstances of woman are; *her* effort is to lighten the burden. Never is he so depressed, but her gladsome eye and voice cheer him. Man *sympathizes* with her in her depression, but he does not so naturally lift her out of it. Woman not only bears up under sor-

row, but enables others to bear up. We do not say too much for her, when we say that she is a well-spring of cheerfulness. There are, no doubt, exceptions to this remark, and they demand our sympathy. There are those whose contentions "are like a continual dropping in a rainy day." There is the dissatisfied woman, whom nothing can please. And there is the angry woman, whose eye flashes with outrageous passion, and who is like a wasp in a garden of flowers. Woman, like man, never feels her own impotence so much as when she is driven to moody sullenness, or has no other resort than uproar and tumult. Would to God that those who constitute these exceptions were elevated above this "moody and sentimental gloom!

An austere, gloomy, sullen, wo-begone woman—from all such may the good Lord deliver us !

Not a little to our shame, we must also add, that woman has *more self-respect than man*. Such is the wise organization of society, and such the decree of God, that more depends upon her character, and she can survive fewer faults. From a few incautious steps and self-inflicted blows, it is very difficult for her to recover. Her circumspection is her safety. And to her honor be it said, she is distinguished for her self-respect. Woman is often artful ; I have sometimes thought that she was more artful than man, because when her heart is strongly enlisted, it is difficult for her not to encourage a

little "pious fraud." Those there are who affect to overbear and depress by their superiority. If you associate with them without the fear of mortification, you still keep them at a distance, and treat them rather with studied caution than unembarrassed courtesy. There is a *blue-light* splendor in some females, which a sensible man enjoys for a moment, but despises at his leisure. There are those, too, who affect to be what they are not, and who are weak enough to desire to be extolled for qualities which they know they do not possess. But though sometimes artful, affected, and of high pretensions, she is *not often vicious*. *When she is vicious, she is vile—viler even than man—more dishonest and faithless, more impudent in wickedness and*

more irreclaimable, because her heart is poisoned, and her affections have not even hope to feed upon. The same classic mythology that represents the *Graces* as symbolized by female excellence and loveliness, when it would represent the extreme of wickedness, true to nature, impersonates the *Furies*—"Furæ Diræ,"—in female forms. As there are characteristic faults in men, in sufficient abundance, so they are not wanting in woman. Milton, when urged by his daughters to describe the character of their mother, and the object of his first love, replied, that she was

"Like the fresh sweet-brier, and early May,
Like the fresh, cool, pure air of opening day,
Like the gay lark, sprung from the glittering dew,
An angel, yet—a *very woman too*."

We pass to another topic on which we proposed to submit a few remarks. It is not unnatural that woman, with these peculiarities, should be formed for a sphere of her own. *What is that sphere?* "Nature herself," one would think, gives a full and sufficient answer to this question. A moment's reflection must show us, that there are characteristics in her physical constitution which render her unfit for those spheres that are occupied by the other sex, and which, if she attempts to occupy, necessarily throw her into inextricable embarrassment. It is not her mission, because it is not her nature, to plunge wildly into the perilous enterprises and active warfare of human life. She was not formed to fell the forest, nor to traverse the

ocean, nor to excavate the bowels of the earth. Nor are they the noisy scenes of barter and exchange for which she possesses any natural accomplishments; nor are they places of power, and trust, and emolument which she is fitted for. Nor was she ever commissioned to occupy the Pulpit, or become a debater in the Forum, or maintain her country's cause in the Senate, or to sit on the bench of Justice, or wield the sword on the field of battle. True it is that there have been instances in which woman has thrust herself into spheres thus uncongenial to her soft and gentle nature. Catharine de Medicis assumed the throne of France; but she was despised for her cruelties and perfidy, and the infamous features of her masculine mind

were evinced by massacres so fearful as to have made the land that witnessed them drink blood because it was worthy. Mary of England well deserved the appellation of the bloody Mary, and died of disappointed ambition. Yet have there been better female sovereigns than these. Zenobia, of Palmyra memory, and the famed daughter of the Arab chieftain—Isabella of Spain—Maria Theresa, of Austria—and Joanna of Sicily, were worthy of the throne, and distinguished for vigor of intellect and comprehensive policy. But after all, this is not woman's place. The exceptions which history furnishes to this natural law, do but confirm the law itself. Such women are anomalies; they wage war upon nature, and nature

enters her protest against the usurpation. Woman is man's *helper*; she is his friend, his counsellor. When he girds his robust frame for the toil of human life, and nerves his heart and arm for its varied conflicts, she is his solace, his comforter. Her place is *at home*, amid those social duties which give tranquillity and joy to domestic life; of which she herself is the queen; whence she sends forth a universally conservative influence, and where she weaves the thousand silken cords which are stronger than bands of iron, and by which the otherwise disjointed and jarring and effervescing elements of society are amalgamated and bound together.

It is amid the endearments and duties of conjugal life, that she so emphatically

lives in her affections; her best and strongest, her purest and noblest affections. This is her throne; this her little world. It is here that she makes the cup of life sweeter by instilling into it exhilarating ingredients that are never thought of, except by her own sovereign alchemy. It is here that she diffuses that pleasant and balmy atmosphere, which is so imperceptible that we scarcely notice it, yet so necessary, that without it we droop and wither. It were not easy to describe the extent of her gentle influence, even where it falls short of being religiously exerted. Woman's heart is so formed, that it is bound up in the heart of her husband; and even though she be not a lover of God, if she be affectionate, beloved, and respected, her

highest wish, and her most delightful employment, are to render her husband respected, useful, and happy. Sympathy with her husband is one of the marked features in her character. She enters into all his feelings, all his occupations, all his interests, all his sorrows, all his joys, all his defeats, all his honors, and all his usefulness. There is a community of feeling and interest between them; a sympathy in weal and in woe, which in prosperity makes everything light and gladsome, and in adversity alleviates its trials, and chases away its depression and gloom. Wearisome care loses its perplexity, toil its hardship, affliction its bitterness, reproach its mortification, and the subtleties and deception of the world their

sickening repulsiveness, amid her artless simplicity, undissembled tenderness, buoyant hope and cheerful love. Bad men are made good, and good men better, through the influence of woman. Few men possess so hardy and gross a temperament as not to be withdrawn from the seductions of vice and licentiousness by the discretion and firmness of an affectionate wife. Where woman is what she ought to be, home has endearments and charms that cannot be easily exchanged for the snares of a corrupt and corrupting world. I would never abandon a wild and hare-brained youth while there is any hope that his heart may be enchained by a virtuous woman; nor would I ever calculate with confidence on the course which the most

promising young man will pursue, without counting on the domestic influences which may animate or depress him, extend or contract his usefulness, without knowing something of the goddess he worships.

It is in this relation, that woman occupies the most responsible of all positions ordinarily known to her sex. In the physical, intellectual, and moral endowments of her children, and more especially in the whole business of forming their character, the mother is the more important parent. Napoleon once said to Madame Campan, "The old systems of education are good for nothing: what do young women stand in need of to be well brought up in France?" The reply of this intelligent

and accomplished lady was, "OF MOTHERS." And it speaks volumes. Give a mother ordinary intelligence and ordinary accomplishments, and she is the centre of attraction alike to her husband, to her sons and daughters. Her ear and her heart are always accessible, because she is rarely absent from her children, and cherishes in them the habits of unrestrained familiarity. She forms their opinions, their habits, their manners, their character, almost as she pleases. I know of no earthly restraint, and no moral power, that can be compared with the wishes of a mother. That tongue of hers in which is the law of kindness; that heart which is all gentleness and love; that wakeful discretion and unwearied patience; that

self-sacrificing spirit, and those tears which sometimes drop as the rain; give her a control which the sterner and more severe government of a father is rarely able to secure. Many a youth of rash and impetuous temperament would venture to disregard the strong bonds of paternal authority, whose heart would fail him in rudely bursting the cord that binds him to a mother's bosom.

“A mother's love !

If there be one thing pure,

Where all beside is sullied ;

That can endure

When all else pass away ;

If there be aught

Surpassing human deed, or word, or thought—

It is a *mother's love* !”

And what daughter is there, in whose bosom there is a spark of womanly virtue and nobleness, who would ever

tue and nobleness, who would ever trample on a mother's love? The world does not know its indebtedness to mothers. Even when left to struggle with their responsible and arduous duties, unaided and alone, they have accomplished that for mankind which demands the most grateful acknowledgment. Who does not dwell with tenderness on the sacred name of *mother*! When we read the biographical notices of such a man as Byron, much as we abhor his character, we pity him; because the ostrich cruelty of a proud and insensate mother made that diamond mind an outcast. Mothers hold in their hands the destinies of millions. Who can estimate the value of a devoted mother? Of how little avail are the

authority, power, and laws of the world, compared with the silent and unobtrusive influence of woman? "Her price is above rubies." They are honors that never wither, when, at a mother's grave, her children rise up and call her blessed!

There are also domestic relations of a less important kind which woman sustains. We have no misgivings at the wisdom of Divine Providence when we survey a family where there is a large preponderance of *daughters*. They are the charm of the domestic circle. The sacred penman beautifully compares them to "corner-stones" in a splendid edifice, that "are polished after the similitude of a palace." As daughters, we love to look upon them; as sisters, it is their province to give preëminence

to the domestic circle above every society, and to make their own happy dwelling more serene and happy. Nor let the forbidding thought ever enter the proud heart of woman, that, though her maidenly honors come thick upon her, her womanly character and influence are of little or no account. God judges otherwise, or, in his wise providence, he would have disposed it otherwise. Some of the loveliest, and some of the noblest and most estimable traits of the female character, as well as some of its most enviable and active virtues, adorn those who themselves would have adorned the most elevated of the social relations; but to whom the all-wise Disposer has refused the responsibilities, the joys and the sorrows

of wedded life. Though denied this inheritance, there are reserved for them spheres of usefulness and honor, which none but woman's mind and heart can occupy. No matter what sphere she fills, if she fills it well she shines. The savor of her feminine virtues and the blessing of her example are no twilight dawning upon this dark and frozen world. She interests, she endears. Wherever she goes, she is man's guardian and friend. Her love is wakeful, even when she watches alone. It sounds the note of alarm at man's exposure; unsought, it shields him. She is never obscure; nor can she ever exclude herself from her share in the concerns of this great world. In her modest reserve, she may feel that she is

a cipher ; while her capacious heart may embrace greater good than thousands more ostentatious and exacting. Be it where it may, unless it is degenerate to unwomanly abjectness, the influence of woman has a predominant sway. Public taste and manners, public virtues and vices, are under her control. Her sway is scarcely less absolute in the empire of morals than in the empire of fashion. Her unseen hand is everywhere forming the character of men, and giving a complexion to the society and age in which she holds a place. She has not the less influence, because she is the more retired. And if she does not so often appear in the pompous emblazonment of heraldry, it is because she would occupy too wide a

place, and her power would be too implicitly acknowledged.

This view of the sphere she occupies suggests our last topic of remark, which is, the *suitable requisites for the fulfilment of her appropriate duties*. The inquiry is a practical one—How shall she best employ herself in this her appropriate sphere, and what are the qualifications she requires in order to act out the peculiarities of her character, and to the best advantage fulfil her high destiny? There are befitting attainments for her, not only as God's creature, and constituting so large a part of the human family; there are attainments befitting her as *woman*, and without which her natural excellences must be suppressed,

her lustre obscured, and her name remain unembalmed.

Let it not be thought that we are degrading our subject, while we say that among these attainments, we hold in high estimation *the homely virtues of industry and economy*. No beauty, no wealth, no embellishment can supply the want of these. It is woman's calling to excel in a practical acquaintance with the arts and duties of domestic life. So far from being beneath her station, they adorn and exalt the most distinguished of her sex. When, in the days of the Tarquins, the Roman army lay encamped around the walls of the capital of the Rutuli, the princes of the Tarquin blood, in their gay boasting, each of the beauty and virtue of his wife,

consented to yield the palm to the one who was found at midnight, with her handmaids around her, working at the loom. Were I the biographer of female excellence, my judgment, my heart, my imagination would induce me to select for my theme some illustrious Christian woman who is preëminent for her domestic virtues. No woman is well educated, who is not qualified to "look well to the ways of her household." To "eat the bread of idleness" is more befitting the slave of an Eastern despot, than the elevated station assigned to woman in Christian lands. I pity the man who is wedded to a woman who, so far from sharing with her husband the burdens of human life, satisfies herself that she has nothing to do but

spend and be supported; and who, when rebuked for her inactivity, can do nothing but weep. Nor do I wonder that many such a man, under a load which he finds it impossible to bear, sinks to a premature grave. We have no apology for the idle, pleasure-loving spendthrift, and hard-hearted husband; there would be fewer *widowers*, if husbands were more kind, and affectionate, and industrious. And we have no apology for the pleasure-loving and spendthrift wife; there would be fewer *widows*, if wives were more industrious and economical. There is no such thing as throwing off the original curse of care and labor either from man or woman. The obligation and the necessity of toil in her own proper

sphere, rests as truly upon all the daughters of Eve, as upon all the sons of Adam. Wealth may furnish a partial exemption from labor; it is no exemption from care. Solomon, in describing a virtuous woman, says that "her candle goeth not out by night." The most splendid women the world has seen, have been those who were most familiar with care and toil. It would be difficult to find more distinguished women than the Countess of Huntingdon, the Lady Rachel Russell, whose husband was beheaded by Charles II., and Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, who flourished during the civil wars in England, and died in prison after the Restoration. But they were women not less distinguished for forethought

and toil, than for the high stations they occupied. And the more retired scenes of private life furnish thousands not less distinguished than they, and not less worthy to be immortalized on the page of history. The woman who would not be a sufferer, must, in the ordinary course of Providence, be alive, awake, and in earnest in the superintendence and management of her domestic affairs. If her hand is not everywhere, her eye must be everywhere, and her authority everywhere in her own household. A cheerful submission to this great law forms one of the prominent virtues of her character, and where this is wanting she is a stranger to woman's true worth and excellence.

Allied to this is a *well-cultivated mind*.

Her intellectual endowments qualify her for high degrees of mental embellishment; nor are there any departments even of solid learning and science which, with suitable training, auxiliaries, and incitement, she might not adorn. The fact that she lives in her affections, rather than in the ambition which stimulates to high attainments in the profound sciences, indicates the limits beyond which, in ordinary cases, her intellectual researches may not be extended; while the station she occupies, the influence she exerts, and the power she possesses over the minds of the young, indicate not less clearly that where her domestic qualifications are not interfered with, she is the more esteemed and honored by all her advances

in knowledge. Aside from the men who are employed in the learned professions, the great mass of females in this land of enterprise and hope are better educated than the males. In the ordinary intercourse of the middle classes, as well as in more polished circles, the number of females who are well grounded in all the branches of a good English education, and who are capable of thinking, and of expressing their thoughts with propriety, force, and elegance, is far greater than that of the other sex. Not many years since, an intelligent lady from a foreign land remarked, that nothing more surprised her than to find so much attention paid in the United States to female education. I will not say, that in reference

to the other sex, this is as it ought to be ; while it is highly creditable to woman. She is the better informed class of the community ; nor is society the loser by her preëminence. Her keen perceptions, her intuitive judgment, her ready wit, her vivid fancy, and her retentive memory, cultivated, enriched, and adorned, render her her husband's pride, the glory of her children, and the charm of the social circle. We regret to express the opinion that, in a solid and well-measured education, the women of the present age are not so far in advance of their predecessors as their opportunities of advancement. They are exposed to magnify the mere elegances of education above its more useful and practical tendencies ; they live

in the song and the dance; or they revel in romance, and melt away in dreamy sentimentalism, when they ought to be more intent on storing their minds with facts and principles; in becoming acquainted with standard authors, and in learning how to turn their attainments to good account. Woman's object is to please; and sooner or later she will learn that she cannot do this with becoming grace and dignity, and cannot do it permanently, where her society is not *instructive*. Men there are who are too proud to be instructed by a woman; but so far is this from being their general character, that the insinuation of female loveliness and modesty is never more welcome than when most instructive. By such teach-

ing, the unthinking of the stronger sex imperceptibly slide into new truths, and make them their own. We need not fear cultivated intellect in woman. Where the God of nature has given her the force, and opportunity the furniture, of a well-disciplined and richly-cultivated mind, she is not the less lovely, nor beloved.

But the most important attainment of woman is *personal piety*. Though in adverting to the peculiarities of woman, we have remarked that she presents the fairer side of human apostasy, we are not to forget that she is one for whom there is no redemption but through Him who "came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance." She was the first to fall, and man's success-

ful tempter. It were no marvel that the blighting effects of sin should pass over her, and leave her scathed with the tokens of God's displeasure. With all her defencelessness and sorrows, there is nothing which woman so much needs as personal piety. Frail woman must have the Eternal God for her refuge. The keen storms of adversity will pass over her, and she will sink beneath its billows, if she have not this refuge, and her defenceless head be not covered with the shadow of his wing.

When we speak of *piety*, we mean something more than a name. By piety, we mean the religion of principle, in distinction from the religion of impulse ; a spiritual religion, in distinction from a religion of forms ; a religion of

which the Spirit of God, and not the wisdom or the will of man, is the author ; a self-denying and not a self-indulgent religion ; a religion that has a heavenward, and not an earthly tendency ; a practical religion, in opposition to the abstractions of theory ; and a religion that is so full of Christ, that the crucified One is at the basis of its duties and hopes, its centre, its living head, and its glory. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain ; but the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Other things there are which constitute her adornment ; this is the brightest jewel in her crown. Separate her inferior and incidental adornments from a heart-felt and practical Christianity ; associate them with immorality, imbue them with

infidelity or atheism; and they are worse than snares—they are a curse to herself and the world. There is nothing of more dangerous tendency and influence than an impious or infidel woman. There are few men in the world so degenerate, and so utterly lost to all sense of right and shame, as to congratulate themselves on an infidel wife, or an infidel mother.

It is without doubt a truth, that there are more pious women in the world than pious men, and that their piety is of a higher order. Nor is this difficult to account for, from the peculiarities of the female character and condition. The facts that she lives in her affections; that she is formed to be confiding; that she is separated from the grosser snares of

the world; that she is not unaccustomed to submission; and that God "hath chosen her in the furnace of affliction," are all in keeping with the abounding grace of God to her sex. When piety is engrafted upon woman's loveliness, I know of nothing so lovely. It is a mantle that covers all her faults and foibles, more than they are veiled even by her beauty. The sweetest emblem of piety, selected by the sacred writers, is *woman*. She is "the daughter of Zion;" a high-born progeny, attired from heaven's wardrobe, "coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved." Piety makes her everything she can be this side heaven. It elevates and beautifies her when the charms of personal beauty are fled; it supplies her

with resources of joy, when the adulations of earth have become faint, its affection cold, and its trials severe; it sanctifies the infirmities of age, and gives her bright anticipations when the bloom and flower of earthly hope languish and decay. It hallows all her domestic virtues, makes her toil pleasant and her self-denial welcome, and carries along with it its own reward. It makes her the better wife, stimulating her husband in his spiritual career, and rejoicing with him as he goes; or if he has not entered upon that career, restrains him from the paths of sin and death, allures him to heavenly wisdom, and by discretion, love, tenderness, sympathy, and prayer, it brings him within the fold of God. And does it not make

her the better mother? Of all the untold millions that are now in heaven, how many, think you, are there, whose conversion is to be attributed to the counsels, the solicitude, the prayers, the tears, the ever-stimulated, *ever-hoping* faith of her that bare them! As a daughter, a sister, or even a faithful and pious servant, how much has piety done for woman, and what dewes of Hermon has it distilled upon her path! In her own unostentatious and retired department, how has she scattered seeds of mercy, which have sprung up, and been cherished, and transplanted to scatter their fragrance under purer and brighter skies!

Piety is essentially the same thing both in man and woman; yet in wo-

man it has her own beautiful and womanly characteristics. Woman's love and woman's tenderness adorn it. It has her meek-eyed humility and her robe of cheerfulness. It blends her timidity and her confidence. It has her cautious delicacy and all the refinement of her manners. It has her nobleness and her instinctive abhorrence of all that is mean and grovelling. It has her unsleeping watchfulness, her patient toil, her self-denying devotement, and her angel ministrations. And while it has her shrinking fears, it has also her unchanging faithfulness and unshrinking valor. Woman, if she cannot contend for Christ, can die for him. The pages of history do not record finer exemplifications of Christian fortitude and

valor, than are furnished by the noble doing, brave daring, and patient suffering of woman. Apathy does not belong to her; stoical indifference forms no part of her nature; a calculating policy finds no place in her warm bosom. It is not she who consults with flesh and blood, when God calls her to advance with an undaunted heart and a firm, undeviating step to the torture, or the death. Flattery cannot move her then; nor is she dismayed by cruel mockings; nor is she confounded before the envenomed tongue of man; nor does desertion leave her deserted. Man's vigilance sleeps when his Saviour lies prostrate. Man's love hesitates and falters when his Saviour is crowned with thorns. Man denies him, and

man betrays. Woman's heart is faithful.

"Not she, with treacherous kiss, her Saviour stung,
Not she denied him with unholy tongue.
She, when apostles shrunk, could danger brave,
Last at his cross and earliest at his grave."

We honor woman, and hold that she is to be honored. We would give her "the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." "Giving honor to the wife," and because she is the weaker and more dependent, is an obligation delightfully in keeping with the dignified spirit and sweet charities of the Sacred Volume. She has trials enough to bear, arising from the delicacy and dependence of her condition, not to be called on to encounter disesteem or reproach. She

has no security but in the magnanimity of the stronger sex ; and that man deserves to be held in very low estimation, who himself cherishes low and mean thoughts of woman. I not only look upon such a man as an ill-bred man, but I cannot help suspecting that he had a bad mother, or that he has a bad wife, or that in his associations with the female sex he has been unfortunate, if not vicious. The history of nations and of men instructs us that their personal and national advancement stand abreast with their treatment of woman. Man is never free, where woman is a slave ; and where she is degraded, in vain may you search for a cultivated and polished community. Degrade woman, and you degrade her offspring, and in every view

make man more degraded. Nature herself inflicts the penalty ; the retribution is sure to be felt in unfailing accuracy and full measure. The records of the past, and a careful inspection of the present, show nothing more clearly, than that just in the proportion to woman's advancement is man the more exalted, virtuous, and happy. One of the first rays of light that broke upon the night of the dark ages, was the gallant and heroic deportment of the stronger toward the weaker sex, which was fostered by the laws of chivalry ; while from that day to this, not only have the social and moral culture of the nations of Europe been progressive with the culture of the female mind and heart, but the peculiarity of their national

character has received its impress from the peculiarity of that culture, and from the degree in which woman has been allowed to retain her own womanly character and station. The Creator honored her by making her his last and fairest work. Her Saviour honored her; man might not share the honor even of his lowly incarnation. If she was dishonored by her first transgression, she has this honor, that the Incarnate One was the "*woman's seed*."

It would be no small gratification to exemplify these general observations by a reference to some of the more distinguished of women whose names live on the pages of secular and Christian biography, had we time for such a reference. Though the biography of woman is not

often written, for the obvious reason that she seeks not the public eye ; yet, such is the redundance of materials for female biography of the richest kind, that the most classic and Christian author would be at a loss to make selections that would do justice, even to himself. He might conduct you to the thrones of princesses, and to the cottages of peasants, and there show you woman in her loveliest virtues. He might point you to her counsels of wisdom as treasured up in volumes alike endeared to the wise and the unwise. He might direct you to halls where science has baptized her thousands by female hands. We are not ambitious of this arduous, though delightful work ; yet is there this one thing of which we are ambi-

tious,—to elevate the standard of female excellence. We would fain have you dwell upon those inimitably beautiful touches of female character delineated by the writers of the Old and New Testaments. We would ask you to inspect; with us, the records of churches from which the young and the beautiful have gone forth to be the adornment of heathen lands. We might go with you to the graves of the departed, and there where mothers sleep, and the cypress mourns, spell out names that were the glory of their sex. We might pass with you to the ever-varying scenes where woman lives not for time, but for eternity; and you might visit, with us, scenes where many a faithful servant of God complains not of the cross, because

he bears it with such a helper, and no longer deems his way rugged and tedious and mournful, because he is travelling with such a comforter and friend. Let woman put on the whole armor of God, and true soldiers of the cross will not be wanting. Their armor will be bright, as hers is embellished; and as is her valor, so will be theirs. God has given woman beauty, loveliness, and self-denying courage; we have nothing to ask for her but consistent piety. Let *woman be pious*, and how will man feel the impulses of her piety! how will this ungodly world feel the constraints of redeeming mercy, and how soon would it realize the vision of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband!

